

# The Banneker Grapevine



Newsletter of the Banneker Ballroom Dance Club

March 2013

## President's Message

By Cecelia Dade-Winfield



Greetings everyone!

Happiness is stepping out on the dance floor in a Banneker ballroom dance class taught by one of the best dance instructors in the metropolitan area—Stan Kelly.

To many long-time members, this dance form has transformed their lives. They have experienced better health, made new friends, and built confidence on the dance floor. Happiness is contagious! The good news about Banneker spreads and curious newcomers visit. Some join the first night while others return the next week, ready to sign up!

New members are apprehensive, nervous, and self-conscious. Stan's patience, precise instructions along with the friendly, helpful coaching of the more experienced members quickly put new members at ease on the dance floor. Comments from these new members include the following:

*"Awesome!"*

*"Am I really doing this?"*

*"I love it!"*

*"This was on my bucket list!"*

*"Can't wait 'til next week!!!"*

As Banneker accepts invitations to perform at various events, larger numbers of experienced, as well as newer members, sign up. As a matter of fact, this latest group of performers is one of the largest! This speaks volumes and serves as a testament to the

excitement and self-confidence of our dancers!

So, let's continue to spread the word. Banneker is THE place to be if you want to really learn ballroom dancing.

### 2012-2014 EXECUTIVE BOARD

Cecelia Dade-Winfield - President

Pauline Hazel - Vice President

Glenca Kande - Treasurer

Inger Hogan - Assistant Treasurer

Brenda Manley - Secretary

Harry Townsend - Assistant Secretary

Margaret Green - Member at Large

*Bright Stars  
of Summer*

*Annual June Gala*

Sunday, June 23, 2013  
7:00 - 11:00 p.m.  
Martin's Crosswinds  
7400 Greenway Center Drive  
Greenbelt, MD 20770  
Tickets: \$60.00 per person  
Attire: Black Tie

**Contact**

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## Janet Collins, African–American Dance Pioneer

By Eddie Witten

Janet Collins was the first African American ballerina of the Metropolitan Opera, but was much more than that. Born in New Orleans, Louisiana in 1917, and raised in Los Angeles, California, Collins nurtured her talents in both dance and art. She studied ballet, modern, and ethnic dances. Her talent for art included drawing and painting.

She was accomplished enough in ballet to be offered a place in the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo at the age of 15—a position she refused when it came with the requirement that she paint herself white. She was versatile enough to excel in modern dance in Katherine Dunham’s and Lester Horton’s companies.

In addition to being an excellent dancer, Ms. Collins was a choreographer and a designer. In the same concert, she could enchant audiences with the folkloric Juba and fascinate them with liturgical dances set to African American spirituals.

Collins was selected by Agnes de Mille for the role of Night in Cole Porter’s Broadway musical, *Out of This World*. The show was a flop, but Collins won the Billboard Donaldson award for the best dancing on Broadway in that same year.

Janet came to the attention of the ballet master at the Metropolitan Opera, who persuaded the director to hire her under contract as prima ballerina—a first for the company.

Her independence, growing spirituality, along with the stresses of touring with the Met and her own company during the segregation era, led her to turn more towards teaching. She worked at a school for the deaf, using dance as a form of rehabilitation. In later years she would choreograph again, this time for the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater. However, she focused mostly on her painting.

### I Dance

By Deryck Chase

I dance  
I hear the music  
I reach for you  
And we dance

I dance  
The music takes me away  
I know you are there  
But I am no longer with you

I dance  
The music has taken over my body  
My senses are dulled to all but the music  
And I am with the spirits

I dance  
They laugh, they clap  
They have become my very rhythm  
I am them and they are me  
They take me away  
To a place to a place I can never be  
Unless  
I Dance

## Christmas Gala: Mistletoe and Majesty

On December 9, 2012, over 300 Banneker members and guests attended one of the most exquisite and festive formal affairs held in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area. The event, set to the theme *Mistletoe & Majesty*, was held at Martin's Crosswinds in Greenbelt, Maryland.

Dancers in gorgeous gowns and black tie attire swirled around the floor to all genre of music presented by G.P. Productions. The mixture of line dancing, hand dancing, and of course, ballroom dancing created dramatic variety on the dance floor.

The buffet menu satisfied the appetites of the most finicky to that of the truly robust, offering hearty soup, luscious crab cakes, and a complement of salads and vegetables.

A wide range of door prizes was won by several surprised guests. One lucky 50-50 winner went home with over \$200! Every attendee received a CD containing a broad selection of beautiful Christmas music. Kudos to committee Chairperson, Brenda Manley, members, Joe Jackson, Angela O'Davies, and Betty Wilkins, and Gala Consultant, Cecelia Dade-Winfield for planning a delightful event.



Everybody loves a line dance.

Photography by David Corry

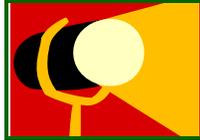
## The Highlight of My Dancing World

By Lakshme Someswaran

It has been a great privilege to be a guest at the many exciting and enjoyable functions held by the Banneker Ballroom Dance Club. Recently, I was lucky to be at the Valentine social for the first time. It was a very homey and extremely welcoming event.

All this started when I was first introduced to this organization by [BBDC member] Trisha McCullough, over a very casual conversation at the Eclipse. Then, the next thing I know, I am part of a glamorous gala amongst beautiful people twice a year, sharing magical moments. Oh dear, how I love these events!

Hello to the friends who didn't make it to the Valentine social that night: You missed the music from a fun DJ, lovely people that treat you like family, and a delicious spread. I had such a fabulous evening—it's almost illegal not to attend.



## Members in the Spotlight



### Dance Team Takes the Show on the Road

Need an American Tango performance? The Banneker Ballroom Dance Club Demo Team is on the move! The team was recently invited by Damita Goldsmith to perform at the Glenarden Community Center's Pre-Valentine's Day Dance. Our Vice President, Pauline Hazel, also invited the team to perform for the Mardi Gras celebration at the historic St. Mary's Episcopal Church in Washington, DC. Stay tuned. There are more events to come!!



From left: Lawrence Lanier, Betty Wilkins, Richard Crutchfield, Minnie Taylor, Charles Cooke, Pauline Hazel, Vincent Parker, Angela O'Davies, Robert Jones, Cecelia Dade-Winfield, Margaret Green

### Who Knew?

By Michael Gunn, BBDC Reporter

We have a line dance instructor among us! Diane Brooks recently joined BBDC after only the second week of the Foxtrot. For two years she has been a line dance instructor at the Hattie Holmes Senior Wellness Center located at 324 Kennedy Street, N.W. Classes are held on Mondays and Fridays.

Prior to teaching line dancing, Diane spent 15 years as a kindergarten and elementary school teacher in the District of Columbia, Prince Georges and Montgomery Counties. Her career also spans public service positions at the Department of Housing and

Urban Development and the Department of Agriculture.



Diane was born in Charlottesville, Virginia and grew up in the District of Columbia. She is a graduate of Coolidge High School and holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education from the University of the District of Columbia.

Her line dance groups perform routinely at the NBC4 Health and Fitness Expo and at various health expos in Annapolis and Silver Spring.

Diane says, "Line dancing is therapeutic. It raises your spirit." Welcome to Banneker Ballroom Dance Club, Diane!

# Birthdays!

January	February	March	April
Cindy Brewer Carl Carlton Nobuko Contee Lori Dendy Robert Jones Bonnie McCoy Betty Smalls Eleanor Stewart Reggie Wingfield Eddie Witten	Fran Alves Robert Bowles Claude Correll Elaine Gunter Glenca Kande Roland Kave Yvonne Rogers Timothy Smith Sharon Walton Jerry Whitfield	Constance Creasey Eve Dickey Margaret Green Michael Gunn David Nelson William L. Woods Drexel Agee Valerie Brooks	Angela O'Davies



## Club Calendar



April	May	June
9, 16, 23 Class: Waltz  30 Theme Social: Days of Wine and Roses	7, 14, 21 Class: Samba  28 Theme Social: The Roaring Twenties	4, 11 Class: Peabody  18 Class: Review 23 Annual June Gala (@ Martin's Crosswinds)

### Class Times

7:00 pm – Introduction | 8:00 pm – Intermediate

### Class Location

6310 Chillum Place NW Washington, DC 20011  
 National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) / Union Hall – Second Floor  
 (Check our online calendar for updates at [www.bannekerballroomdance.com](http://www.bannekerballroomdance.com))

**Newsletter committee: Betty Wilkins, Eddie Witten, Michael Gunn**

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